GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1192
ANSWERED ON:30.11.2005
FIRE IN COAL MINES
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Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether fire in several coal mines of Dhanbad (Jharkhand) has not been put off since years;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) the number of such mines in the country ;

(d) the estimated quantum of coal getting burnt into ashes per year; and

(e) the action being taken by the Government in this regard ?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR.DASARI NARAYANA RAO)

(a)&(b) : As reported by Coal India Limited, prior to nationalization there were 70 mine fires in Jharia coalfield. As a result of the efforts made by Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) 10 fires have been extinguished and spreading of number of fires have been controlled. At present, there are 40 mines which are affected by fires in Jharia coalfield (Dhanbad) under the jurisdiction of Bharat Coking Coal Limited.

(c) & (d): Presently there are no other mines of Coal India Ltd having active fire except those mentioned in reply to parts (a)&(b) above. There have been cases of mine fires in past in some of the mines having fiery seams which have been controlled and sealed off. It is not possible to make an yearly assessment of coal getting destroyed by fires. However, as per study conducted by Central Mine Planning SDesign Institute Limited, reserves of coal lost due to fire is estimated at around 37million tonnes in Jharia Coalfield.

(e) : The following steps have been taken to control/extinguish fire in coal mines:

i) Sand flushing into active fire zone from surface to underground through boreholes.

ii) Surface blanketing to prevent breathing in of air to the fire area,

iii) Inert gas flushing from surface through boreholes to extinguish fire,

iv) Quenching of spot fire and mining out the quenched coal,

v) Sealing of the part of the mine under fire by construction of fire stoppings/isolation stoppings.

vi) Application of fire resistant sealant in and around the isolation stoppings/fire stoppings,

vii) Regular monitoring with the help of Co-detectors, taximeter, air sampling and analysis of the same at colliery level.

viii)Trench cutting by mechanized means to excavate fire and to prevent spread of the same,

ix) Intentional flooding by water to quench the fire in some mines.Apart from above actions, 16 schemes for dealing with fires, control of subsidence and reclamation of land/rehabilitation in BCCL have been sanctioned and funded by the Government. Out of these, 9 schemes have been completed. A Master Plan has also been prepared to deal with fires and control of subsidence in Jharia coalfield as a long term measure.